COMMUNITIES AT WORK

ISSUE 3 SPRING 2006

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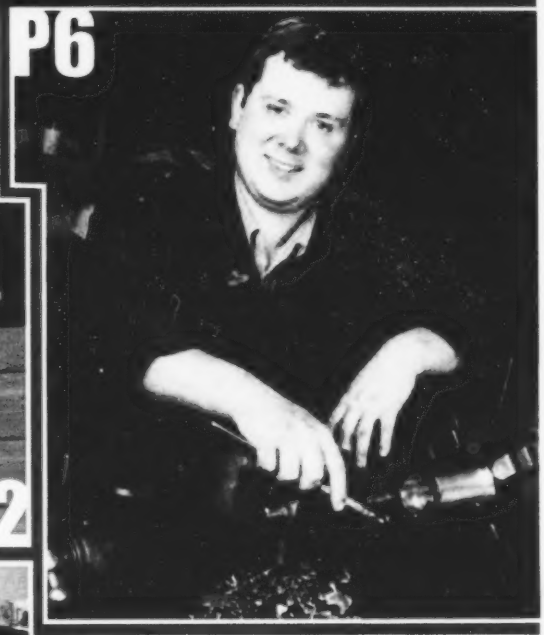

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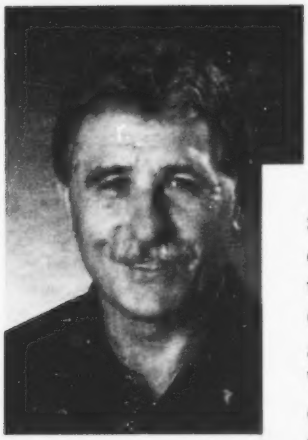


April 2006

Deputy Premier,

Minister of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development

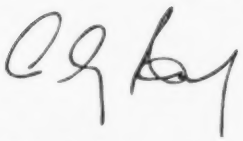
Since our last Communities at Work issue, the Premier has given my department some additional responsibilities and to reflect those additions, the name of the portfolio has been changed to Regional Economic and Co-operative Development. In every corner of our province, communities are examining how to harness the economic potential of their region. While the strengths of each region are unique, they have one important commonality – the hard work and co-operation of people who care about their homes, their communities and their province.

The new name reflects the critical importance of those efforts to define and grow our communities and our regions. It also shows support for Saskatchewan's strong co-operative sector, which continues to build on a tradition as old as our province. Nowhere is this culture of working together for the common good more apparent than in our rural areas, and my department will maintain a key focus on those areas as we move forward.

Saskatchewan's REDAs continue to work very hard in their developmental efforts throughout the province. Together with businesses, community leaders and residents, First Nations and Métis peoples, and government, REDAs are leading the way to a brighter economic future. These partnerships have resulted in world-class economic development practices being utilized to the benefit of our regions.

In February, the Province of Saskatchewan celebrated REDA Week in recognition of the important work REDAs carry out at the grassroots level. The week featured a number of special activities including the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association's (SEDA) "Moving to the Next Level" conference, February 22 and 23 in Saskatoon.

The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to be a key partner of the REDAs and will continue to work hard to enhance this relationship. The Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development is committed to facilitating economic growth throughout the province. We will work with you in identifying your regional strengths, developing capacity and building opportunities.



Clay Serby

ORGANIC FARMERS BRING TRADITIONAL IDEAS TO MARKET

A group of organic farmers and other investors have gone back to some well-tested ideas and techniques to market their products in today's fast-paced global marketplace. The farmers, located in the Maymont area of northwest Saskatchewan, recognized the need for a seed cleaning plant and a secondary processing plant for their organic products. They also saw the need for a marketing plan to help them gain a share of the growing demand for organic grains – so they formed a co-op.

The investors – about 55 organic farmers and 35 others – purchased the school building in Maymont and incorporated the Northwest Organic Community Mills Co-operative in 2003. Some of the producing members involved in building the co-op had their sweat equity converted into shares.

"We do seed cleaning, and we also hold meetings where organic farmers can brainstorm marketing ideas and help each other," says Brian Reiley, who manages the co-operative. "We're also just starting to move into selling our flour in 10 or 15 local stores."

The flour is marketed, fittingly, under the *Old School Organics* brand name. Reiley adds that the co-op is working on new packaging, as it also plans to distribute the flour to more retail locations, such as the Saskatchewan Made Marketplace stores around the province.

"We also sell our grain to brokers, who ship it to Japan, Italy, the U.K. and the United States," Reiley says. "I visited Germany, Belgium, England and Ireland last November, and consumer demand for organic products in those places is far greater than here. But, we are experiencing good acceptance in the towns around here where our products are sold. In some cases, organic products just weren't available before."

Brian Reiley sees a bright future for the Northwest Organic Co-op.

Co-op member Dale Beaudoin says hard work, determination and a positive attitude have contributed to its success, in spite of some poor crop conditions due to the weather. "The co-op idea is a positive way for producers to work together," he adds.

"I think we've enlightened a lot of people," adds Reiley. "Some people were skeptical about the chances for an organic co-op, but we've proved we can do well. And, we're looking at more growth in the future."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Northwest Organic Co-op at 389-2118;
- Visit www.northwestorganicmills.com; or
- Call Wayne Thrasher, RECD at 787-0190 or Christa Watson, RECD at 446-7444.

SUCCESS BY THE PAIL FULL

Lorenda Friesen (left) and Kim Heddon have crumbled their way into a successful business.

Good cooks know you need the right ingredients to create a successful recipe. Entrepreneurs Lorenda Friesen and Kim Heddon have done just that with their Cookie Crumbles business, which began 10 years ago on a Meadow Lake acreage.

Friesen and Heddon knew there were hundreds, if not thousands, of community and charitable organizations looking for unique fundraising opportunities. Their business, Cookie Crumbles, provides a tasty and profitable solution. Cookie Crumbles fills orders for their nut-free cookie dough in health inspected facilities, freezes the dough and delivers the orders to the clubs, teams and schools that have pre-sold the product. These groups make $4 profit on each pail of cookie dough they sell.

One of the key ingredients to Cookie Crumbles' success is in the dough itself. Friends and family members served as "taste testers" for several cookie recipes until they were satisfied they had it right. When Friesen and Heddon completed their down-home research and development, they had eight flavours of delightful cookie dough with a taste that entices customers to keep coming back for more.

"Once we had the recipes right, we could prepare about 180 pails in a six-hour day," Friesen recalls. "Then there were the other business details to attend to. It was hard work, but we could see what we'd accomplished at the end of the day."

As sales climbed into the thousands of pails, the partners took the next step: franchising. Cookie Crumbles now has four franchises in Saskatchewan, three in Alberta and one in Manitoba. The partners are currently looking at expanding across Canada.

"Our success has been phenomenal," says Heddon. "We are proud of our rural Saskatchewan roots and the continued growth we are experiencing."

"Cookie Crumbles has been a great way to supplement our incomes, without leaving home," adds Friesen. "While our main job now is to manage the franchising, we do make dough every time we train a new franchisee. Sometimes we go down to the local franchise, just to get our hands in the dough for a while," she laughs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Kim Heddon at 236-4026;
- Call Lorenda Friesen at 236-3498;
- Visit www.cookiecrumbles.ca; or
- Call Christa Watson, RECD, at 446-7444.

"YOU" GIVES ENTREPRENEURS THE BASICS OF BUSINESS

Kelly Sonagy (left), owner of More Than Just Flowers minds the shop with her mother, Susan Kearns. Kelly received training at a YOU workshop in Kipling.

Bert Roach was surprised – pleasantly surprised – when 10 people came forward to take entrepreneurial training in Kipling. Roach is the Community Development Officer for the Town of Kipling and Economic Development Officer for the Moose Mountain Central Rural Development Co-operative. He guided the group through YOU, the Youth Opportunities Unleashed training modules, which are intended to help young entrepreneurs aged 18 to 30 realize their business goals.

YOU is an enhancement to the Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) program, which provides loans of up to $15,000 to help business start-ups or expansions. The training package includes four introductory workshops on entrepreneurship, financing a business, business management and marketing a business. The Moose Mountain RDC and the Town of Kipling partnered to have Roach deliver the workshops to the group.

"We waived the 30-year age limit, but the majority of the people were under 30 anyway," Roach says. "Kipling is a small community, and to offer two sessions running concurrently is an achievement. We're very happy with the number of people who came forward to invest in our communities."

Of the people participating in the workshops, five were existing business owners, including two who are considering expanding, likely with the help of a SBLA loan. One person had recently sold a business and was planning to start another. Four others were considering starting a business. They will likely apply to the SBLA for funding within a year, says RECD Development Officer Birdie Thompson, who provides support for SBLAs located in eastern Saskatchewan.

Approximately $1 million in small business loans were made to Saskatchewan youth under the program in 2005.

"The training modules are available for anybody," Thompson notes. "YOU puts an emphasis on youth because they are our next generation of entrepreneurs. A mentorship component to the YOU program is also in development."

Roach says the modules provide the basics for business planning, and they alert entrepreneurs to things they need to think about. The courses also help them overcome their initial apprehension about establishing a business. "There's so much to think about, it seems daunting," Roach says. "YOU breaks it down into understandable bits, so that people can say, 'Yeah, I know where to start!'"

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Burt Roach at 736-8399; or
- Birdie Thompson, RECD at 787-7935.

SBLA LOAN WORKS FOR SASKPRO

Tyler Metz is one of a growing number of young entrepreneurs building prosperous small businesses in rural Saskatchewan.

Tyler Metz grew up on a farm near Langenburg, and that's where he developed his work ethic and his problem-solving abilities. Both qualities have served him well since he established Saskpro Machine Works at Esterhazy in 2002.

Metz is a journeyperson machinist who is determined to live and raise his family in rural Saskatchewan. His determination has transformed his initial one-person business into a bustling shop that employs another journeyperson machinist, two machinist apprentices, two machinist helpers, a journeyperson welder and two office staff. He also received a hand from the local Small Business Loans Association (SBLA), which provides loans of up to $15,000 at low interest rates to help business start-ups like Saskpro.

"The SBLA loan helped me purchase equipment for the shop. It's just been invaluable," says Metz. "And when the Credit Union saw the support that I had from the SBLA, they provided me with an additional loan. They treat me the same way I treat my customers."

Metz also credits Esterhazy Town Council, a supportive economic development officer and overall community support as key factors in making it possible for him to establish there.

Saskpro's customers are primarily potash mines, construction companies, processing plants and farmers in the area. Metz's marketing strategy is to meet his customers face-to-face or to talk with them regularly over the phone. "Direct contact is huge," he says. "My clients want to know there is an expert there, ready to help them problem-solve. That's why 'We have the solutions to your problems' is our company slogan."

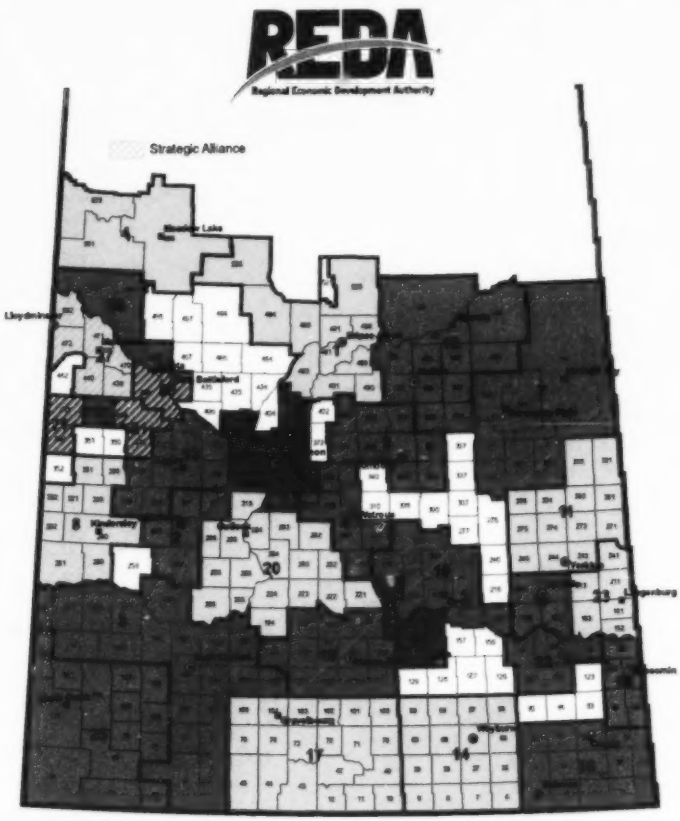
That same approach guides Saskpro's recent expansion into stocking oils, tooling, toolboxes and related products for its customers. Its prices are also very competitive with that of other suppliers. "It's more of an extra service than anything," says Metz.

When the question of further expanding the business comes up, Metz states without hesitation that he would be crazy not to tap into the SBLA program again. "It's accessible, and the low interest rates are attractive in today's tough business market. It was absolutely essential in helping me get started."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call SaskPro Machine Works at 745-6440; or
- Call Birdie Thompson, RECD, at 787-7935.

REDA LOCATIONS



1. Prince Albert	953-4888	16. Cornerstone	453-6097
2. Entrepreneurs 2000	882-1300	17. Red Coat	648-3525
3. Southwest	778-4240	18. South Parkland	728-6878
4. Northwest	236-2407	19. Moose Jaw	693-7335
5. Long Lake	946-2223	20. Mid Sask	867-9553
6. Saskatoon	664-0723	21. Border/	
7. Etomami	278-2311	Strategic Alliance	446-7506
8. West Central	463-1997	22. Mainline	696-2550
9. Carlton Trail	682-2631	23. Yellowhead	743-5177
10. Touchwood	723-4688	24. Regina	522-0227
11. Good Spirit	783-7332	25. Cypress Hills	662-4299
12. North East	862-6732	26. Prairie to Pine	892-2544
13. Midwest	948-2295	27. Big Gully/	
14. South East	842-8001	Strategic Alliance	446-7506
15. Gateway	435-3177	28. Battlefords/	
		Strategic Alliance	446-7506

REDA WEEK CELEBRATED FEBRUARY 19 TO 25

Organizations committed to grassroots community economic development were celebrated for their achievements during Regional Economic Development Authority (REDA) Week in Saskatchewan, February 19 to 25.

Saskatchewan's 28 REDAs develop and promote the economic strengths of their regions and represent collaboration among local governments, businesses, communities, co-operatives, First Nations and Metis people, and other economic development organizations.

"REDAs harness the economic potential of our regions through partnerships and engagement, and that gives Saskatchewan a distinct advantage for regional growth," Deputy Premier and Regional Economic and Co-operative Development Minister Clay Serby said. "By fostering investment and job creation, our REDAs are leading the way to a thriving, diverse economy and enhancing our quality of life."

Saskatchewan Rural Development became Saskatchewan Regional Economic and Co-operative Development on April 1.

"REDAs will continue to play a key role in the new Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development," Serby said. "The new department will retain the emphasis on rural economic development and growth that the previous department had."

FEATURE

REDA LOCATIONS

1. Prince Albert	953-4866	16. Cornerstone	453-6097
2. Entrepreneurs 2000	882-1300	17. Red Coat	848-3525
3. Southwest	778-4240	18. South Parkland	728-6878
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REDA WEEK CELEBRATED FEBRUARY 19 TO 25

Organizations committed to promoting

PARTNERSHIP SHARES BENEFITS

Dylan Clarke, South East REDA Manager, and Robert Smith, Weyburn City Manager have big plans for the city.

When the South East Regional Economic Development Authority (SEREDA) was established 10 years ago, the City of Weyburn came on board as one of the original partners. The City had operated its own economic development department before that, but had disbanded it to cut costs. When the prospect of joining SEREDA presented itself, the City saw a chance to actively court development opportunities in a cost-effective way.

"The City pays SEREDA $1 per capita as a member, plus we provide part-time economic development services under a contract," explains Dylan Clarke, the manager for SEREDA. The contract provides about $30,000 to SEREDA, a major source of revenue for the Authority. In addition to this, Regional Economic and Co-operative Development contributes $60,000 in direct funding to SEREDA, plus additional monies through the REDA Enhancement Fund.

"We will go after specific projects or sectors the city officials identify as having potential for development," says Clarke. "We also work actively with companies or individuals planning to invest in a project to the point of turning soil, then hand it off to the City."

The NorAmera BioEnergy ethanol plant is a good example of how the partnership works. The City and SEREDA shared the cost of an opportunity study to find uses for the vacant distillery building on the outskirts of Weyburn. NorAmera eventually purchased the building. SEREDA, Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation, and the City also cost-shared a study to plan and design safe access to a new commercial development adjacent to Highway 39. The area has attracted new Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire and Tim Hortons stores.

"We're very happy with the REDA," states Weyburn Mayor Don Schlosser. "A lot of the groundwork for the ethanol plant was done by SEREDA. We have a good working relationship, where I and other city officials will direct people needing information about Weyburn to the REDA."

Clarke appreciates the City's support, particularly for SEREDA's work in the rural areas. "The City realizes that not every project that comes our way is a good fit for them. They also recognize that, because they are the service centre for the region, they still get benefits from new regional projects," Clarke says. "There is a large number of regional projects in various stages of development right now, and it's good to have that support from Weyburn."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call John Slatnik, Regional Development Manager, RECD at 306-637-4505;
- Call Dylan Clarke, Southeast REDA Manager at 842-8001; or
- Call Don Schlosser, Mayor, City of Weyburn at 848-3200.

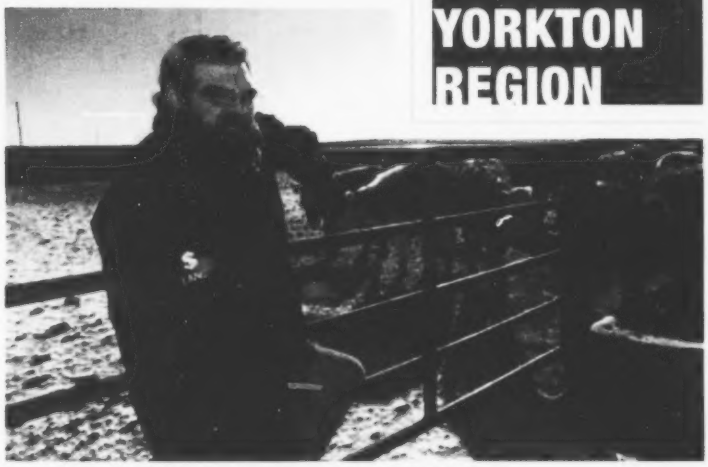
ECONOMIC CLUSTER BENEFITS REGION

The pursuit of more value-added agriculture in Saskatchewan often means putting pieces together to create a base for new developments. But first, you have to find all the pieces – or create new pieces to fill in the gaps. That's the idea behind an initiative underway in east-central Saskatchewan to develop "food clusters" that will export value-added food products, rather than raw agricultural commodities.

A cluster is a group of companies and related organizations that collaborate to grow their business. Using this collaborative team approach allows businesses, regions and interest groups to develop greater speed, quality, innovation and critical mass. This assists in resolving practical issues like training, infrastructure and procurement.

The Mainline Regional Economic Development Authority, which serves communities along Highway Number 1 from Whitewood to Wolseley, is developing the food cluster. Mainline REDA general manager Larry Lang began by identifying the feedlots, hog barns, grain producers, feed mills, slaughter facilities and other firms that might form part of a cluster. The next step will be to conduct one-on-one interviews with those enterprises, to develop a bigger picture of food-related activities in the region.

"I first conducted an interview with Pipestone Feeders Ltd.," says Lang. "From that, I developed a set of standard questions, to determine what information owners/operators would be willing to provide. The interviews will cover four areas: barriers to development or expansion; possible markets for their products; development of their service or product; and environmental issues their business faces."



Larry Lang thinks food clusters will create big opportunities for his region.

Lang stresses that the information gathered will remain confidential, but is needed to compile an industry analysis that can help to support existing firms and identify opportunities for expansion within the cluster.

"Pipestone Feeders is one of the core anchors of our food industry in this region, with Natural Valley Farms being another," Lang says. "Agriculture, and particularly the cattle industry, is a strength of this region, and one that we must take advantage of."

Mainline REDA is a member of the East Central Agri-Business Action Committee, which is pursuing additional food cluster development across a larger area that encompasses three REDAs and includes several other organizations in the region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Larry Lang, Mainline REDA, at 696-2550;
- E-mail lang.hmc@sasktel.net; or
- Call Jenay Werle, RECD, at 786-1415.

ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION

How do you sell lemonade in Saskatchewan in December? That wasn't exactly the challenge facing students at Kyle Composite School, but it's close. The lemonade marketing challenge is part of a day-long workshop aimed at inspiring the entrepreneurial spirit in students from grades 7 to 12.

The Southwest Regional Economic Development Authority was aware of an existing program, and made arrangements to purchase it for delivery in the southwest region. The REDA then invited the nine directors of education in the region to discuss presenting an entrepreneurial workshop in rural schools. The pilot project, with 60 students at Eastend School taking part, was a success. Since then, more than 300 students in southwest Saskatchewan have participated in the workshop.

"The workshop is activity-based; the students are always doing something," explains John Parker, Manager of the Southwest REDA. "After hearing the stories of some local entrepreneurs in the morning, the students break into groups of six or seven and play the Lemonade Marketing Game. They build and decorate a lemonade stand, make lemonade, decide on a price for it and create a marketing jingle. It's a fun day."

The workshop is delivered free to Southwest REDA members. Those outside the REDA pay a fee. Kyle joined the REDA in 2005, and 79 students at the school participated in the workshop last December. "It was a worthwhile, exciting and interactive entrepreneurial workshop for all students and staff," observed school Principal Marlene Gillanders. Future workshops will take place in other towns.

Vickie Newmeyer, the general manager for the Meridian Community Futures Development Corporation at Kindersley, delivers the Lemonade Game portion of the workshop. While the game focuses on marketing and entrepreneurship, the students also learn about co-operation, leadership, sales skills, customer service and public speaking. One of her favorite moments was when she was presenting at the Nekaneet First Nation on St. Patrick's Day, 2005. Newmeyer recalls. "When I came into the school gym I noticed a cardboard box tipped on its side, with three plastic cups filled with green jello and whipped topping. A Grade 4 student was selling them for 25 cents each. He was sold out before lunchtime. I used my small friend in each of the examples of how he addressed Product, Price, Promotion, Place and People. His idea was brilliant – and it demonstrates the enterprising spirit in our Saskatchewan youth that we need to encourage," Newmeyer concludes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Dianne Sletten, RECD, at 778-8415; or
- Call Southwest REDA at 778-4240.

Students at Kyle Composite School recently participated in a day-long workshop aimed at inspiring their entrepreneurial spirit.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE CREATES WIDESPREAD BENEFITS

Sometimes, bigger is better. That's the thinking behind the year-old Battlefords, Big Gully and Border REDA Strategic Alliance, an alliance of three Regional Economic Development Authorities on the northwest side of the province. The REDA Strategic Alliance, unifies economic development activities in an area of the province where communities share many common interests, resources and infrastructure.

"The three REDAs pooled their human and financial resources into a combined venture," says Jan Swanson, the regional manager for Saskatchewan Regional Economic and Co-operative Development. "Now those communities can focus on more significant projects and more effective services for the entire region."

After just one year of operation, adds General Manager Ryan Bater, the Alliance is already handling an impressive slate of active projects. For example, the Alliance is currently conducting an oil and gas industry sector analysis to determine the level of current and future exploration and production, and identify barriers to the expanded development of the sector. The analysis will also compare the actual direct costs of operating an energy resource business in Saskatchewan with other jurisdictions. The goal is to better equip the region to attract investment in the sector.

"We see the potential for significant economic opportunity from oil and gas," says Bater, "and we want to be sure we're proactive in exploring these opportunities."

The Alliance has also introduced a Business Retention and Expansion program, based on the understanding that already established businesses offer the greatest opportunity for future growth in the region. Through personal visits and surveys of 175 businesses, the program aims to identify specific development issues. Another survey of close to 50 urban and rural municipalities has been completed to determine their capacity for future development, and the scope and variety of programs available to attract investment. This information will be used to develop a regional plan, enabling the REDAs to work with municipalities to retain or expand existing businesses, and attract new ones.

The oil and gas project received $7,000 through RECD's REDA Enhancement Fund, which provides cost-shared funding for regional development.

"With the development of new extraction and refining technologies, the region is more able to exploit our oil and gas resources than ever before," said Swanson. "Now is the time to work with stakeholders to make sure that happens."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Call Ryan Bater, Strategic Alliance, at 446-7506;
- E-mail battlefordsreda@sasktel.net; or
- Contact Jan Swanson, RECD, at 446-7444.

Strategic Alliance General Manager Ryan Bater is part of a joint effort between three REDAs to create new economic activity in the region.

OPTIMISM BLOOMS IN OGEMA

Ogema EDC Secretary Carol Peterson (left) and Mayor Wayne Myren are proud of where the town is heading.

At first, it may seem odd that tiny Ogema, Saskatchewan, was able to beat out Canada's largest communities for bragging rights by winning the "Best Sustainable Development" award from Communities in Bloom. That is, until you hear about the work of the town's economic development committee. "It's an informal group of 20 or 30 people," says Ogema Mayor Wayne Myren, "but they have incredible energy and enthusiasm."

It's the community spirit that shapes Ogema's inspiring comeback story. In 1989, when recent census data indicated that Ogema had faded to 290 people, local folks decided to form an economic development committee and take action. Following numerous successful ad-hoc projects, the committee developed a strategic plan in 2001, with funding support from the Red Coat Regional Economic Development Authority. "The plan gives the committee a more targeted approach to where we're going," says Myren.

Since then, the community has attracted a second hog operation, and a local metal fabrication company has expanded into repairing railcars. The company recently landed a repair contract from the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation and is negotiating a contract with the Farmer Rail Car Coalition.

The town is also cashing in on heritage tourism. Myren boasts that Ogema has the original "Corner Gas," a community-restored 1925 British-American Oil company service station that draws many visitors. Some of those visitors stay in the 16-unit motel that the town moved in and renovated. Myren says he can't believe how busy it has been.

Volunteers also located a train station, moved it into town and restored it, complete with eye-catching landscaping. Myren has plans for a replica water tower and, eventually, a train shuttling visitors from the station at the south end of Main street to the Pioneer Museum Village just north of town.

As a result, the town of Ogema now numbers 330, and bills itself as "The Job Creation Capital of Saskatchewan," having created 90 jobs in the past five years. It's planning for another 75 jobs over the next five.

"You worry about maintaining what you have," Myren says, "but for the first time in 20 years, we have more kids in playschool and kindergarten than in Grade 12, which is a good sign for our community."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Wayne Myren, Chair, Ogema Economic Development Committee, at 459-2552; or
- Call Grant McWilliams, Regional Manager, RECD, at 694-3623.

LONG LAKE AREA BUSINESSES SHOW THEIR STUFF

This year, the Long Lake Regional Economic Development Authority is trying something different with its seventh annual trade show. This year's show, set for April 7 and 8 in Watrous, marks the first time the show has been held in early spring instead of its usual October time slot.

"REDA staff begin planning the show three to four months in advance, so we hope to duplicate, if not increase, the numbers from the 2003 show, which was the last time the Long Lake REDA held it in Watrous," says Marlene Puetz, the Economic Development Officer who co-ordinates the show. "It's an opportunity for all businesses in the Long Lake region to showcase the goods and services they provide."

The 2006 edition of the trade show will be held in the Watrous Curling Rink, centrally located within the Long Lake REDA boundaries. The show has also been held in Nokomis, Simpson and Manitou Beach, but returns to Watrous every second year.

This year, booths are available for up to 47 exhibitors. Puetz notes that, in the past two shows, about one-quarter of the exhibitors came from outside the REDA region.

"The exhibitors represent a wide range of products and services, which appeals to many different potential customers," Puetz says. "In the past, we've had home business operators offering film and photography services, food and household products, giftware, cleaning products, jewelry, skin care and make-up products, and financial planning services. Store-front exhibitors include floral and giftware, meat and deli products, insurance services, furniture and appliances, rental and agricultural equipment, fitness equipment, agriculture services and construction companies," she says.

Since 2003, the REDA staff have also organized horticultural and agricultural workshops that are included in the trade show entrance charge. Puetz says the workshops help boost attendance at the show. Presenters and topics are still being finalized for the workshops on Saturday, April 8.

"The last REDA trade show at Watrous drew over 600 people. With the range of exhibitors, the workshops and the spring date, we hope to do even better than that this year," Puetz says.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Marlene Puetz, Economic Development Officer/Tradeshow Co-ordinator, Long Lake REDA, at 946-2223; or
- Call Barry Gunther, RECD, at 787-2753.

Visitors to the Long Lake REDA Trade Show can expect to meet Marlene Puetz (right) as they make their way around the show.

PRINCE ALBERT REGION

CAPACITY EXCHANGE BOOSTS MANUFACTURING UP-TIME

The pioneers who came to Saskatchewan quickly realized the benefit of trading something they could offer in order to get something they needed. Bartering was common when houses or barns needed to be built and fields needed to be broken and ploughed. That's the basic idea behind the Manufacturer's Capacity Exchange, although the exchange uses high-tech tools to connect companies with something to trade. The items they have to trade also reflect our industrialized economy.

The Capacity Exchange operates through a secure website, www.capacityexchange.ca, where members can post information about what they have to trade. The Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association (SEDA), in partnership with the Carlton Trail REDA, holds the rights to the website and the information there. Currently, about 55 members use the website on a regular basis. Members access details of the items listed on the site in a secure area.

The Carlton Trail REDA, based in Humboldt, is one of the original partners in the exchange. It got involved to address the need for skilled labour in some sectors and the desire to create jobs in other sectors. Classified postings advertising labour needs remain a key function of the website, encouraging a community approach to employee recruitment. The exchange has also expanded with the goal of promoting more "up-time" in the manufacturing industry by balancing workloads among member businesses. Increasing "up-time" allows area businesses to remain busy – and profitable.

"Members can trade labour, machine and design hours, materials, transportation, manufacturing equipment and/or physical space for storage or to help a new business grow," explains Verona Thibault, Executive Director of SEDA.

"Companies can choose to hide their identities until they choose to self-identify. When the transaction is completed, each user receives feedback from the partners involved, so the partners establish their online reputation," Thibault explains. "The exchange also enables companies to pool their capabilities to form virtual organizations to bid on larger projects. This helps keep their people and machines busy, and it encourages co-operation among different firms in the same sector. It also enables companies to achieve greater economies of scale. Potential 'bid' work will be posted on the site to encourage the formation of virtual companies," she adds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Edie Spagrud, Economic Development Officer, Carlton Trail REDA, at 682-2631;
- Call Verona Thibault, Executive Director, SEDA, at 384-5817; or
- Call Wayne Phillip, RECD, at 953-2275.

The Carlton Trail REDA board was instrumental in making the Capacity Exchange a reality.

COMING EVENTS

April 21-22

Kipling Chamber of Commerce Trade Show

Community and commercial dlsplays from around town and around the province, speakers corner, door prizes.

- Contact: Moose Mountain Central Rural Development Co-operative at 736-8399.
- Visit: www.townofkipling.ca.

May 1

2006 Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards

Deadline for Nominations: May 1, 2006.
Awards ceremony: October 16, 2006.
Regina

- Contact: Warren Crossman, Saskatchewan Co-operative Association, at 306-244-3702 or 244-2165
- E-mail: warren.crossman@sask.coop.

May 17-19

Business Retention & Expansion International (BREI) 2006 Annual Conference

This event is recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as professional development training that counts toward the recertification of Certified Economic Developers
Omaha, Nebraska, USA

- Visit www.brei.org/resources/conference/conf2006.htm.

July and August

Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program (SCYP)

If you're 14-18, determined to do something that will change your life for the better, improve your self-esteem and give you the skills you'll need to achieve your dreams, then SCYP is the place for you!
Candle Lake and Last Mountain Lake
Contact: Program Officer at 244-3702; Fax: 244-2165;

- E-mail: scyp@sask.coop.
- Visit www.sask.coop/youth.

Saskatchewan Regional Economic and Co-operative Development

Inquiry line: (306) 787-9703
Toll free: 1-800-265-2001
Website: www.recd.gov.sk.ca

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Fax: (306) 933-7692

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Fax: (306) 778-8526

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23 Smith Street West
YORKTON SK S3N 0H9
Phone: (306) 786-1415
Fax: (306) 786-1417

CANADA-SASKATCHEWAN BUSINESS SERVICE CENTRE

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SASKBIZ

Website: www.saskbiz.ca